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Southern Lebanon: Geographic Perspectives on a Possible Israeli Invasion

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A Research Paper

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Southern Lebanon: Geographic Perspectives on a Possible Israeli Invasion

A Research Paper

*Information available as of 16 April 1982
has been used in the preparation of this report.*

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
[redacted] Office of Global Issues.
Comments and queries are welcome and may be
addressed to the Chief, Geography Division,
[redacted]

This paper has been coordinated with the National
Intelligence Council and the Defense Intelligence
Agency. [redacted]

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Chronology of Major Events

1920

Creation of French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon and British Mandate for Palestine.

1922

Demarcation of boundary between Lebanese and Palestinian Mandates.

1943

Unwritten National Covenant between Lebanese Christians and Muslims agrees to an independent postwar Lebanon based on confessional representation in 1932 census which showed a slight Christian majority.

1946

French withdraw, Lebanon gains independence.

1948

Israel is founded; Lebanese participate with other Arab League forces in subsequent attack on new Jewish state. Approximately 100,000 Christian and Muslim Palestinians flee from northern Israel into Lebanon.

20 July 1949

Israel withdraws from the Lebanese territory seized in 1948.

1958

US Marines land near Beirut in response to request for assistance from Lebanese Government.

December 1968

Israeli commandos land at Beirut Airport and damage or destroy 13 commercial aircraft in retaliation for attack on El Al plane in Athens.

1969

Cairo accords between the PLO and Lebanese Government legitimize Palestinian military presence in southern Lebanon.

1969

Palestinian guerrillas begin cross-border shellings and incursions into Israel, prompting Israeli reprisal raids and preemptive strikes into Lebanon. Many Lebanese border villages are abandoned; many homes destroyed.

September 1970

After intense fighting Jordanian military defeats Palestinian forces and restores order. Weak Lebanese Government is unable to resist subsequent Palestinian guerrilla influx.

1970

Israeli raid into southern Lebanon penetrates to a distance of 16 kilometers and lasts 32 hours.

April 1973

Israeli commandos attack homes and offices of leading Palestinians in Beirut, killing three top guerrilla leaders.

May 1973

Clashes between Lebanese Army and Palestinians leave 60 dead and hundreds wounded; Palestinian forces are reinforced by Syrian-based Palestinians; Muslim pressure on Lebanese Government forces Army to suspend major efforts to control guerrilla activity; alarmed Christians begin strengthening private militias.

October 1973

Egypt and Syria attack Israel on Yom Kippur. Lebanon not involved.

1974

Palestinian groups raid Qiryat Shemona and Maalot, killing 40 Israeli civilians.

April 1975

Heavy fighting breaks out between Palestinians and Phalangists in Beirut following ambush of busload of Palestinians. Incident regarded as beginning of civil war.

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March 1976

Civil war in full swing; Lebanese Army splits along sectarian lines.

June 1976

Syrian Army enters Lebanon; US Ambassador and economic officer are murdered.

July 1976

Israel establishes border crossings with Lebanon under "Good Fence" program.

August 1976

Palestinian refugee camp, Tel-al Zaatar in Beirut, falls to Christian forces after a 52-day siege. Signals beginning of last phase of civil war.

October 1976

Riyadh minisummit ending civil war creates 30,000-man Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) that includes mostly Syrian forces.

March 1978

Guerrilla attack on Israeli bus prompts Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon up to the Litani River. UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is created by UN Security Council Resolutions 425 and 426: Resolution 425 calls for Israeli withdrawal and creation of UNIFIL; 426 spells out force's terms of reference.

June 1978

Israelis turn over control of 5- to 10- kilometer-wide border zone to Lebanese Army unit commanded by Major Saad Haddad, a Lebanese Christian.

July 1979

Last of non-Syrian units of the ADF depart Lebanon.

July 1980

Phalange defeats rival National Liberal Party militia, thus establishing control over East Beirut.

April 1981

Heavy fighting takes place between Syrian and Christian forces in Zahlah and across the confrontation line in Beirut; Israeli Air Force shoots down two Syrian helicopters in the Bekaa Valley. Syria moves SA-6 surface-to-air missiles into Lebanon.

24 July 1981

After heavy cross-border shelling, US-negotiated agreement ends hostile military action from Lebanese and Israeli territory.

15 April 1982

Fighting breaks out between Shiite militia (AMAL) and leftist groups including Palestinians in Beirut and southern Lebanon.

25 April 1982

Scheduled Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

July-August 1982

Scheduled presidential elections in Lebanon.

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Armed Political Entities in Lebanon

Entity	Leaders	Military Strength
Lebanese Government	President Ilyas Sarkis	21,600
Maronite Christians		
Lebanese Front Phalange	Pierre and Amin Jumayyil, Bashir Jumayyil (Militia Head)	30,000
National Liberal Party	Camille Chamoun Dany Chamoun (Militia Head)	
Christians in the south	Major Saad Haddad	2,000-2,500
Zgharta Front	Sulayman Franjiyah Robert Franjiyah (Militia Head)	3,000
Lebanese Muslims		
National Movement Progressive Socialist Party	Walid Jumblat	10,000-12,000
Murabitun Various smaller parties	Ibrahim Qulayiat	
AMAL Shia Militia		7,000-8,000
Syria (Arab Deterrent Force)		22,000
UNIFIL		7,000
Palestinians		
Fatah	Yasir Arafat	7,000-10,000
Saiqa	Issam Qadi	2,000-4,000
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command (PFLP-GC)	Ahmad Jabril	200-500
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)	Nayif Hawatmah	500
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)	George Habbash	500-1,000
Front for the Liberation of Palestine (FLP)	Taalat Yaqub	100-200
Arab Liberation Front (ALF)	Abd al-Rahim Ahmad	300-500
Popular Struggle Front (PSF)	Samir Ghushi	Less than 200
Black June	Sabri al-Banna	Less than 200

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**Village Populations in Christian-Dominated
Area Along Israel's Northern Border
(in East-to-West Order)**

Village	Estimated Population	Religious Composition	Village	Estimated Population	Religious Composition
Kafr Shuba	400	Druze	Al Habis	300	Mixed
Halta	0		Yarun		
Al Majidiyah	50	Druze	Aynata	2,000	Muslim
Al Mari	150	Mixed	Bint Jubayl	8,000	Muslim
As Sulayyib	200	Mixed	Harat as Sidri		
Arab al Luwayzah	50	Mixed	Kunin	150	Muslim
Al Amrah			At Tiri	300	Muslim
Mazra at Sarda	0		Ayn Ibil	4,000	Christian
Al Khiyam	0		Hanin	0	
Dibbin	200	Muslim	Dibil	400	Muslim
Al Balat	500	Muslim	Rumaysh	4,000	Mixed
Marj Uyun	8,000	Christian	Ayta ash Shab	400	Mixed
Al Qulayah			Bayt Lif	500	Muslim
Al Khirbah			Al Qawzah		
Dayr Mimas	750	Mixed	Ramyah	50	Muslim
Kafr Killa	3,000	Muslim	Marwahin	0	
Al Udaysah	2,000	Mixed	Shihin	200	Mixed
Rabb ath Thalathin	50	Muslim	Umm at Tut	50	Muslim
Bani Hayyan	50	Muslim	Al Jibbayn	50	Muslim
Tallus	100	Muslim	Yarin	0	Muslim
Markaba	400	Muslim	Ad Duhayrah		
Hula	1,000	Muslim	Tayr Harfa	300	Muslim
Mays al Jabal	900	Muslim	Abu Shash		
Muhaybib	100	Muslim	At Matmurah	0	
Blida	750	Muslim	Shama	150	Muslim
Hayy Bir	750	Mixed	Alma ash Shab	1,200	Christian
Nasir			Al Bayyadah	150	Mixed
Aytarun			Ash Shawmarah	300	Muslim
Marun ar Ras	0		Total	41,750	

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